



# SRI LANKA

## **Drought Impact Assessment and Monitoring using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Services**

**Implemented By:** Ministry of Disaster Management

**Assessment Technical Lead:** United Nations World Food Programme



**World Food  
Programme**

**August 2017**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

### Food security:

- Across surveyed districts, the number of food insecure households (average household size = 4 members) increased by 22% from 227,000 to 277,000 between February and August this year. Including Jaffna and Killinochchi, an estimated 300,000 households are currently food insecure.
- Approximately 81,000 households in the surveyed districts are reported as severely food insecure<sup>1</sup>, compared to 75,000 in February 2017 which is approximately a 7% increase within six months.
- Food insecurity remains highest in the dry zone areas of coconut & agriculture triangle (LK 13). Agricultural labour and subsistence farmer households are the most vulnerable households whose food insecurity has been severely affected.

### Coping mechanisms:

- 70% of households report adopting severe or moderate negative coping mechanisms to ensure food security, increasing from 62% in February.
- Most commonly adopted coping mechanisms are eating less preferred food, reduced number of meals per-day and eating reduced portions.
- Every next household surveyed mentioned that their debts have almost doubled compared to last year due to a lack of agriculture-based income. Households reported that the amount of money owed in formal loans has not increased, indicating that families are turning to informal lenders for credit.
- 22% of the surveyed population reported that they are currently having access to government drought relief programmes, including compensation under crop insurance programmes, government drought relief programmes etc.

### Access to water:

- Overall water levels in reservoirs are at 18% in the beginning of August compared to 47% this time last year.
- 45% of communities have reported that their closest reservoirs are now empty. Almost 75% of the farmers mentioned that the water for irrigation was extremely insufficient. Reservoirs have reached almost at the dead storage levels.
- No rains are expected to arrive until Mid-September inter-monsoons and December monsoon rains and farmers and households will have to rely on the ground water sources for the coming months. The forecasts for **maha** season (Oct 2017- April 2018) is giving probabilities for rainfall to lie in the bottom third of the historical normal rainfall totals - or significantly below average rainfall (ECMWF seasonal forecast).

<sup>1</sup> Severely food insecure households: Households whose food consumption levels is below the acceptable threshold levels and ideally not meeting the daily minimum calorie intake .also using extremely negative food consumption based negative coping mechanisms i.e. limit number of meals a day, limiting the intake, prioritize children and only feed children, limit the expenditure on education and health.

## Agriculture:

- Paddy cultivation target of Yala 2017 season is 400,000ha; it was already 20% less compared with the Yala 2016 paddy targets. Low water availability in the irrigation tanks and weather uncertainty at the beginning of the season, reduced the paddy cultivation targets.
- Paddy cultivation progress as at end June 2017 was 254,967 ha; 64% of the target which is almost equal to 50% of the normal enrolment rate in a Yala season.



- Generally, paddy planting is expected to be completed by the end of June 2017. Therefore, the estimated paddy harvest in Yala 2017 will be around 1 million metric tons. As a result of failure in two consecutive agricultural seasons, the country's food security has highly deteriorated and has to depend on importations. As per the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, the total rice production in year 2017 is only sufficient for reaching the demand of seven and half months vs 14 to 15 months in a normal year.
- The lowest rate of paddy cultivation in Yala 2017 was reported in the coconut & agriculture triangle (LK 13). The main two districts representing LK 13 are Kurunegala and Puttalam and reported paddy cultivation rates in Yala 2017 are 28% and 12% respectively. Northern Mixed Agriculture (LK06) and Mahaweli Irrigated Mixed Farming (LK07) livelihood zones were also reported as very low enrolment rates.



## Key Recommendations

- 85,000 households are in need of immediate food assistance to prevent further adoption of negative coping mechanisms until the next harvesting season in February- March 2018.
- Plans should be formulated immediately to meet the seed requirements for Maha 2017/18 and Farmers should be supported with agricultural inputs for cultivating arable lands in wet zone for paddy cultivation.
- Livelihood support including cash for work activities for agricultural daily labours should be introduced immediately until the labour opportunities become available in the maha 2016/17 planting season.
- Renovation of water-wells, boreholes and tube-wells as secondary sources of drinking water is important.
- A multi-sector water management strategy should be developed to adopt the agricultural and meteorological droughts in Sri Lanka specially focusing on medium and long-term drought risk reduction strategies.



## Summary Methodology

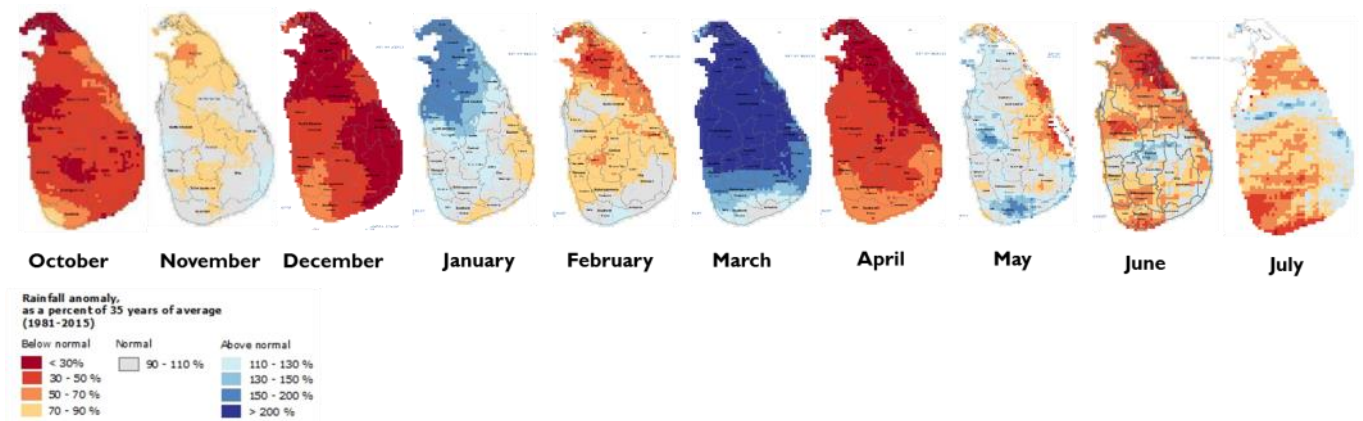
Five livelihood zones which consists of 10 districts( Ampara, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Mannar, Vavuniya, Kurunegala, Puttlam, Moneragala, Hambanthota) were surveyed using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Services. Population Proportionate Sampling technique for sample creation by using the population data and reported under drought / dry weather impacts.

This survey findings are statistically significant at drought affected population and at zone level.

## ANNEX I

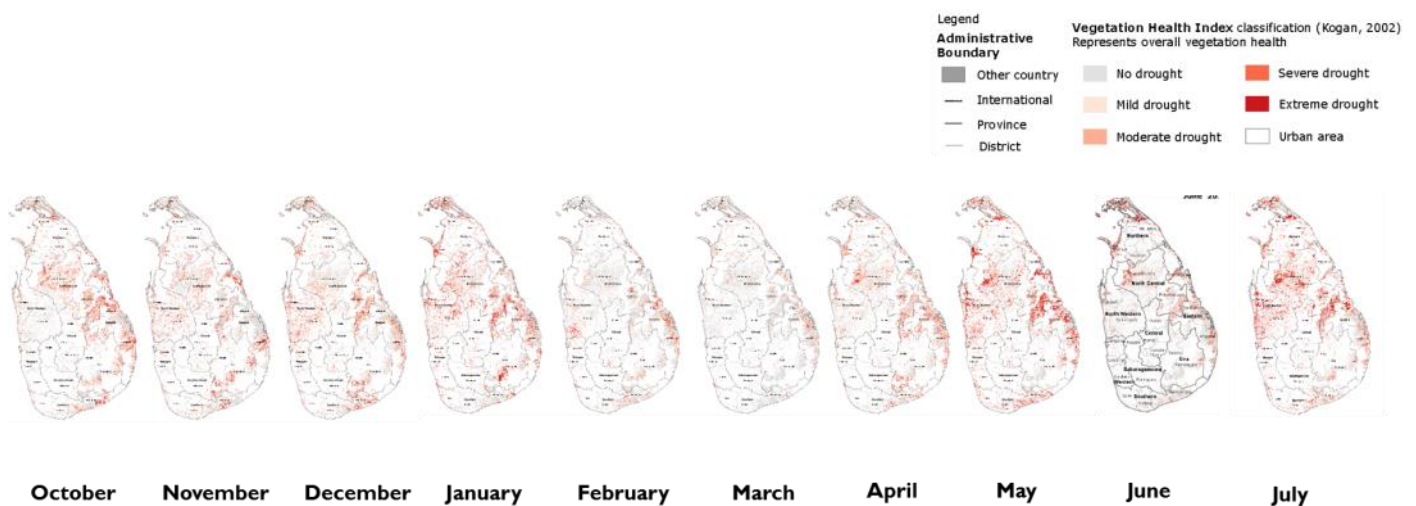
### CHANGE IN METEOROLOGICAL DROUGHT CONDITIONS (OCT 2016– JULY 2017)

**Map 01: Rainfall anomaly**



### CHANGE IN AGRICULTURAL DROUGHT CONDITIONS (OCT 2016– JULY 2017)

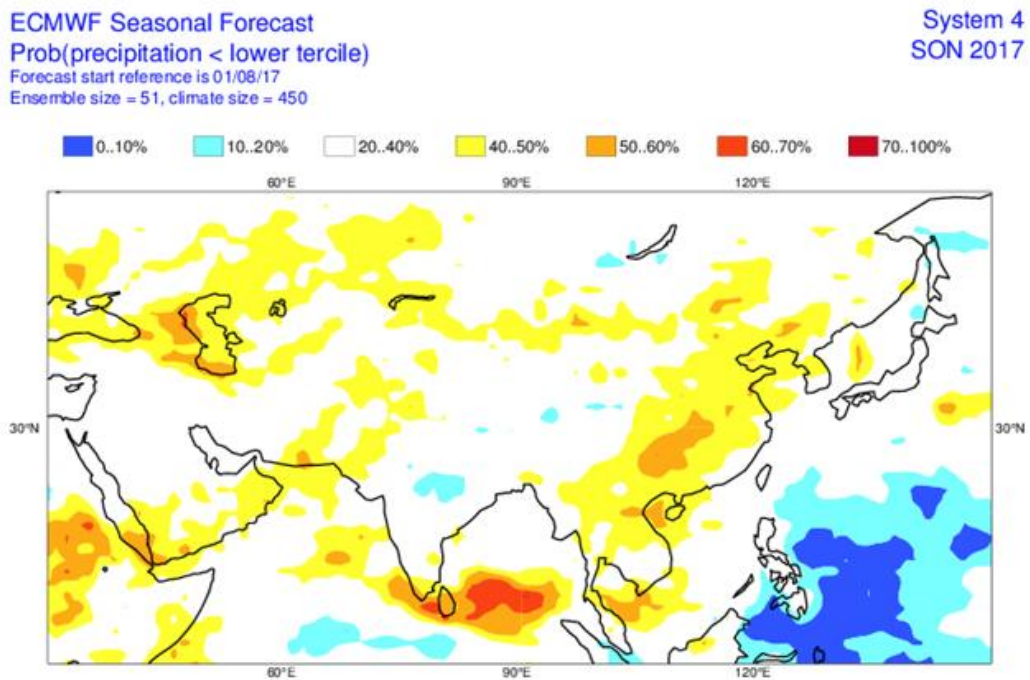
**Map 02: Vegetation Health Index**



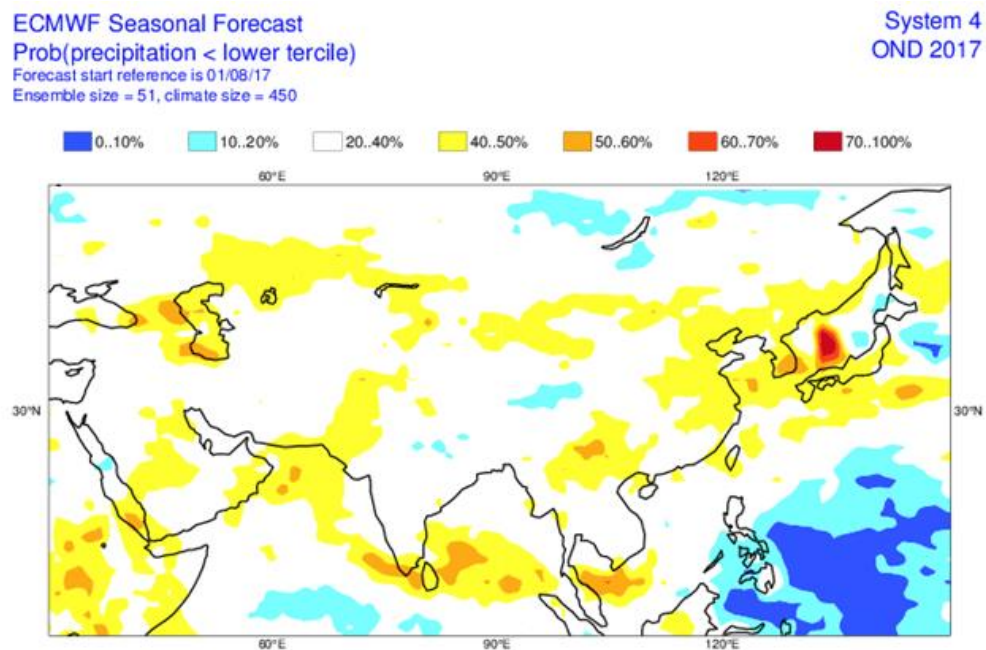
Source: Platform for Real-time Information and Situation Monitoring

## ANNEX II: SEASONAL RAINFALL FORECASTS

September 2017—November 2017



October 2017— December 2017





**World Food  
Programme**